**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Energising the Startup Ecosystem in Maharashtra :**

**A Conversation with Aaditya Thackeray**

Saturday, March 06, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. on Zoom Platform

IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Startups and Innovations Committee organised **Energising the Startup Ecosystem in Maharashtra : A Conversation with Aaditya Thackeray** with Hon’ble Shree Aaditya Thackeray, Cabinet Minister of Tourism, Environment and Protocol, Government of Maharashtra. The session was moderated by Ms Paula Mariwala, Chairperson, IMC Startups and Innovations Committee.

The Hon’ble Minister pointed out that Maharashtra government which also is a startup government, is focusing on how to facilitate in establishing a powerful start-up ecosystem and not miss the opportunity to be a start-up hub of India. The government is trying to entice more and more innovators, startups and entrepreneurs to the state by trying to create conducive environment for the growth of startups.

He is confident that Government’s endeavour is on the right track as it has been able to attract over 1 lakh 13 thousand crores of FDI investments last year during the lockdown which is the highest across the country.

The Government is focused on reforming education to create a questioning generation in order to facilitate more and more innovations and development. The minister firmly believes in strengthening two sectors to promote startups in Maharashtra i.e.

* providing **connectivity and infrastructure** like the Mumbai Nagpur highway, MTHL, Coastal Roads, new airports etc. and
* **ease of doing business** which is twofold in nature like single window clearance and make clearances time-bound and procure easier licenses.

He also emphasized that as an Environment Minister he wants his department

* to **NOT** be a hurdle in setting-up industries,
* be **proactive** in reducing carbon footprints, and
* **not be a speed breaker** in the speed of progress of the state of Maharashtra but there should be no compromise on environment.

He stated that the government is focussing on setting up of industries but more on what industries have to do for various compliances post set-up, which is a continued process. The ministry is planning to set up a Commission to reduce compliances and move to self-certifications, which will be a huge gain for not only the startups but bigger industries as well as MSMEs.

The government has shown that environment can co-exist with sustainable development in the last one year by establishing and executing on ground work of more than 82 to 85% of the MoUs that has been signed and created jobs and growth. Infrastructure work did not stop during lockdown, 808 acres of Aarey in Mumbai was declared as a conserved forest, 10 conservation reserves were declared in Sahayadri’s, 10,000 hectares of mangroves is going to be declared protected. The government is having 24 green field nodes around the Mumbai Nagpur highway like education city, recuperative health city, protective healthcare etc. and trying to layout generation of solar energy successfully through these various highway projects and dams.

On being cross questioned by the hon’ble minister himself, Paula Mariwala opined that the **government should act as an enabler but then largely stay out of too many regulations**. Incentives where needed in sectors like energy etc. where there should be government involvement, but largely they should stay out which was acknowledged by Hon’ble minister, who said government pitching in should only be if there is a complete market failure.

He also emphasized that the next big thing for India is energy and we have to move from thermal energy to various green energy options for which start-ups and innovations will be the enablers. The government has setup a high level working department for Electric Mobility which is headed by him to enable clean energy and setting up of ancillary supply system. He wants Maharashtra to be the electric mobility and hydrogen fuel technology hub as he is a believer in energy transition.

To control pollution Majhi Vasundhara has been launched to reduce our own carbon audits by implementing energy audits, travel audits, water audits etc. wherein a lot of NGOs and European countries have been involved with the government to increase the EPRs and reduce waste and get public participation and awareness.

Minister informed where Tourism was concerned 2020 was a mixed year for Maharashtra with no business in the first three months of the lockdown post which farmstays, agrostays, villastays etc. took off exponentially. Domestic tourism is doing really good due to the new agri tourism policies, beach shacks policies, and caravan tourism policy etc. coming up. India Today has ranked Maharashtra number one from number five last year which had largely focused on policy shifts like a lot in the ease of doing business which is attracting new hotels to the state.

He also requested IMC to increase these interactions with government and industry for getting the practical view of government and industry collaborations to build on more feedbacks and newer ideas.

On education, minister emphasized that it was of utmost priority since it is through education that solutions to problems can be achieved. Government is increasing its reach and quality of education through technology and audio visuals. Government is trying to incentivise education through free services, so that it reaches the last mile and focuses on learning in different innovative ways with right learning.

**Ms Paula Mariwala** concluded by thanking the youthful energy of the minister and looked forward towards collaborations with the government to help with solutions to take the State forward and also acknowledged the way the government and frontline workers have managed the pandemic in Maharashtra.

**Mr Rajiv Podar**, President, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his welcome address said IMC being quintessentially rooted in Maharashtra having its headquarters in Mumbai, is committed to play its part to help the government build capacity and resilience for future shocks. He also informed that IMC have embarked on a Mission Engage Maharashtra which was launched by Hon’ble Chief Minister Shree Udhhavji in presence of Hon’ble Shree Subhash Desaiji. The Mission entails the Chamber and its expert committees working closely with Government of Maharashtra to Reboot-Reform and Resurge the Economy of our State.

**Mr Juzar Khorakiwala**, Vice- President, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his Vote of Thanks, appreciated Hon’ble minister for his eloquent, clarity of thoughts and the depth of his knowledge at such a young age which flowed in the session.

The Conference was well attended by 117 participants representing Industry leaders, startups, MSMEs etc.

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